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AUTHOR Martin, Cecil L.
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ABSTRACT

The report interprets and summarizes the findings of thirteen public schools in Columbus, Ohio, each of which evaluated its social studies curriculum using the Project PRIMES model. The model, supported by a field service unit of four evaluation specialists, included instrumentation consisting of four components: staff development, curriculum and program, facilities, and instructional materials. Thirteen principals, 75 parents, and over 200 teachers in the 13 schools rated a series of items as to the degree to which the conditions stated should exist and actually do exist. Analysis of data reveals that: 1) teachers participate regularly in various activities, use a variety of teaching methods, and keep abreast of current events; 2) consultants should be made available by assigning resource personnel to each regional center; 3) learning activities are appropriate to program objectives, but evaluation data is little used for program planning and improvement; 4) the social studies program improves students' individual and group problem solving skills and involves them in community affairs; 5) more field trips and facilities for independent study are needed; 6) instructional aids such as games and puzzles, periodicals, free materials catalogues, 8 millimeter film loop projectors, cassette television, and program learning materials are in short supply. Recommendations for improvement at the building-level, system-level, and project-level are also made. (RM)

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COLUMBUS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

270 EAST STATE STREET
COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215

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A Report on

Elementary School Curriculum
Social Studies Component
Project PRIMES:
Progress Research in Meeting
Elementary Standards
ESEA, Title III
1972-1973

Prepared by

Cecil L. Martin, Evaluation Specialist

under the supervision of

Dr. Dale Baker,
Supervisor, Project PRIMES

and

under the direction of

Dr. Damon Asbury, Director
Department of Evaluation, Research and Planning

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Section I

Specifications of the Project

A. Statement of Purpose

During the 1972-1973 school year, the Columbus Public and Diocesan schools initiated self-evaluations in one or more curriculum areas in order to meet mandated evaluation requirements of the State Department of Education. Project PRIMES was funded to pilot an evaluation model which would facilitate elementary schools in their evaluations.

B. Procedures

The PRIMES model included a field service unit of four evaluation specialists and a set of instruments which were to be used by the schools in evaluating six different curriculum areas. Each school chose the curriculum area which they wished to evaluate and established a Building Evaluation Committee to implement the instrument in a way which would best serve the needs of that school.

Each building evaluation committee was composed of the principal, teacher representatives, parent representatives and optional representation of students in that school.

The services of the evaluation specialists were made available to the school through the selection of one of three alternative approaches. Table I differentiates the services available under each approach.

Of the 151 participating schools, 13 public schools chose to evaluate social studies. There were no parochial schools which chose this content area. Table II lists these schools and denotes the approach selection of each school.

The self-evaluations in these 13 schools included input from 13 principals, 75 parents and over 200 teachers. All thirteen schools completed the entire instrument and the information obtained is presented in Section II of this report.

C. Instrumentation

The instrument used by the schools evaluating social studies was locally developed by parents, teachers, principals, and consultants in the Columbus Public and Diocesan School Systems. It consisted of four components; staff development, curriculum and program, facilities, and instructional materials. The respondents were asked to rate a series of items as to the degree the condition stated should exist as well as the degree the condition stated does exist. The scale under both column headings ranged from 1 to 3, with 1 representing hardly at all, 2 representing moderately, and 3 representing strongly. The "should exist" column was to the left of the items and the "does exist" column was to the right of the items. Interpretation of the

TABLE I

THE SERVICES AVAILABLE TO SCHOOLS THROUGH THE THREE ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES OFFERED BY PRIMES

Approach	Types of Services Available
Approach I	1) Evaluation Specialist briefs the school principal as to evaluation procedures. 2) Specialist conducts orientation sessions for Building Evaluation Committee and school staff. 3) Specialist implements evaluation instruments at work sessions. 4) Specialist conducts consensus sessions and brings evaluation to closure.
Approach II	1) Evaluation Specialist briefs building principal as to evaluation procedures. 2) Specialist conducts orientation sessions for Building Evaluation Committee and school staff. 3) Specialist conducts consensus sessions and brings evaluation to closure.
Approach III	1) Evaluation Specialist briefs building principal as to evaluation procedures.

TABLE II

COLUMBUS PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
SELECTING SOCIAL STUDIES FOR EVALUATION
AND THE APPROACH SELECTION CHOSEN FOR
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EVALUATION INSTRUMENT

		Approach Alternatives		
	Elementary Schools	Approach I	Approach II	Approach III
1.	Bellows		X	
2.	Berwick			X
3.	Chicago	X		
4.	Crestview	X		
5.	James Road		X	
6.	Kenwood	X		
7.	Leawood			X
8.	Lindbergh	X		
9.	Salem		X	
10.	South Mifflin	X		
11.	Trevitt	X		
12.	Westgate	X		
13.	Willis Park			X
	Totals	7	3	3

data was based upon the discrepancy between the responses in the two columns.

Section II

Results

A. Staff Development

The majority of schools reporting felt that teachers foster their competence in social studies education by participating regularly in various activities. The social studies instrument, however, did not make provision for delineating these activities. The concept that teachers promote human dignity among students by setting a good example was strongly confirmed by the respondents. It was also reported that a variety of teaching methods is used by teachers and that teachers keep abreast of current events through their own professional reading.

The schools felt that teachers should participate in active social studies curriculum committees but that such committees are not the practice now in Columbus. The availability of social studies consultants was considered low (See Figure I) and possibly could be remedied by assigning resource personnel to each regional center. ((See Figure II).

B. Curriculum and Program

Nine (9) of the thirteen schools reporting stated that behavioral goals and objectives existed in their school. All thirteen schools felt that such objectives should exist. All schools commented that the learning activities were appropriate to the objectives of their social studies program. Twelve (12) of the thirteen schools felt that their goals were adequately evaluated. However the use of evaluation data for program planning and improvement was questioned by the respondents. Of the eleven schools responding to the item, seven schools felt that such data was seldom used for this purpose. Only three schools felt strongly that data was used for program planning. (See Figure III.)

The majority of schools felt that the social studies program should include the use of many and varying sources of information. The following series of graphs depicts the degree of use of such sources of information. (See Figure IV.)

All of the schools (13) felt that the social studies program focuses upon a pluralistic society and the contributions of all persons of different races, religions and cultural backgrounds. The respondents also felt that the program continually helps students to improve their individual and group problem-solving skills as well as helps them to organize their experiences and thus make responsible contributions to the group. Teachers noted that activities are conducted in a climate which develops self-esteem for each student and that the program helps to involve students in the affairs of their community.

Figure 1

ITEM: SOCIAL STUDIES CONSULTANTS ARE AVAILABLE FOR HELP.

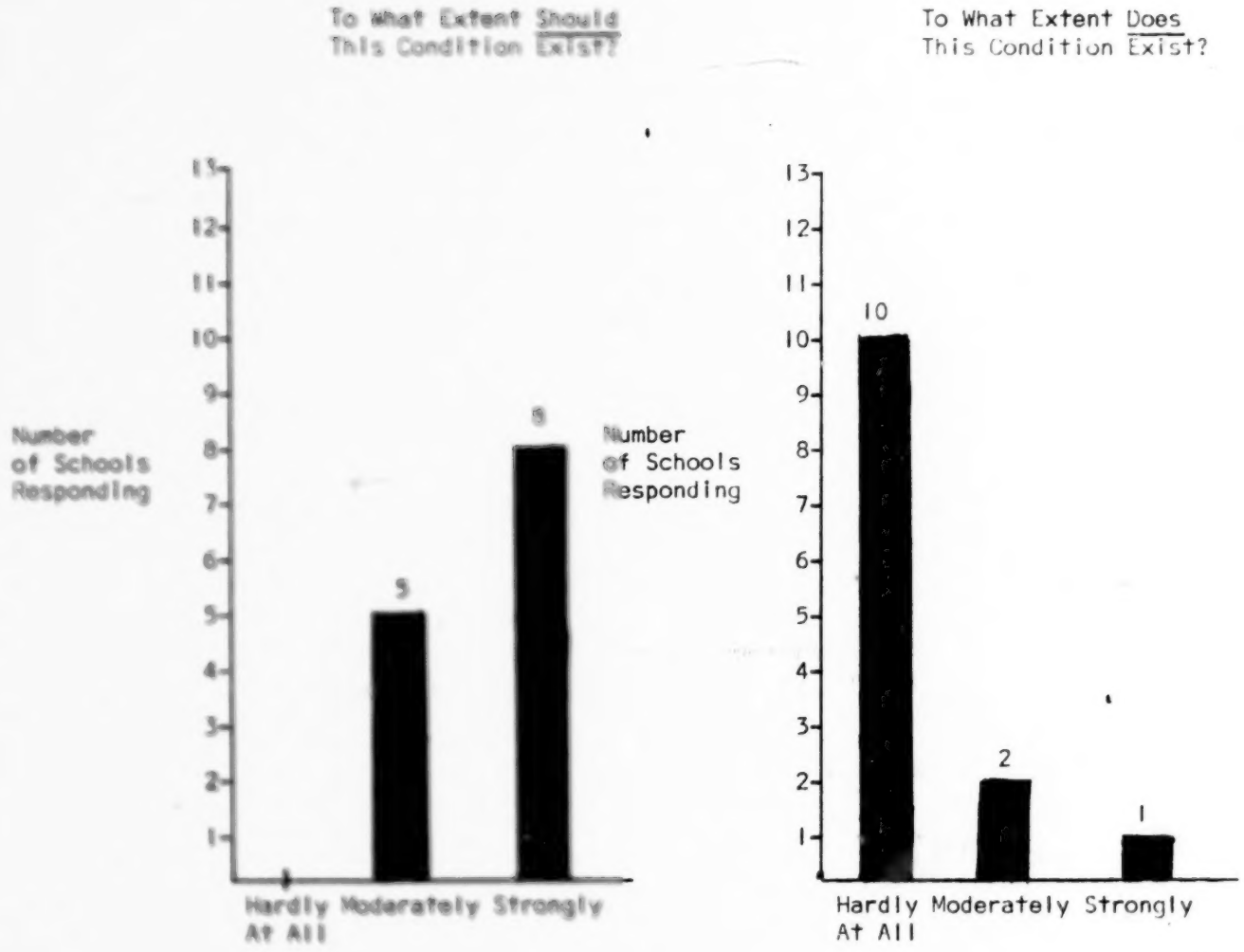


Figure 11

ITEM: RESOURCE PERSONNEL SHOULD BE ASSIGNED TO EACH REGIONAL CENTER.

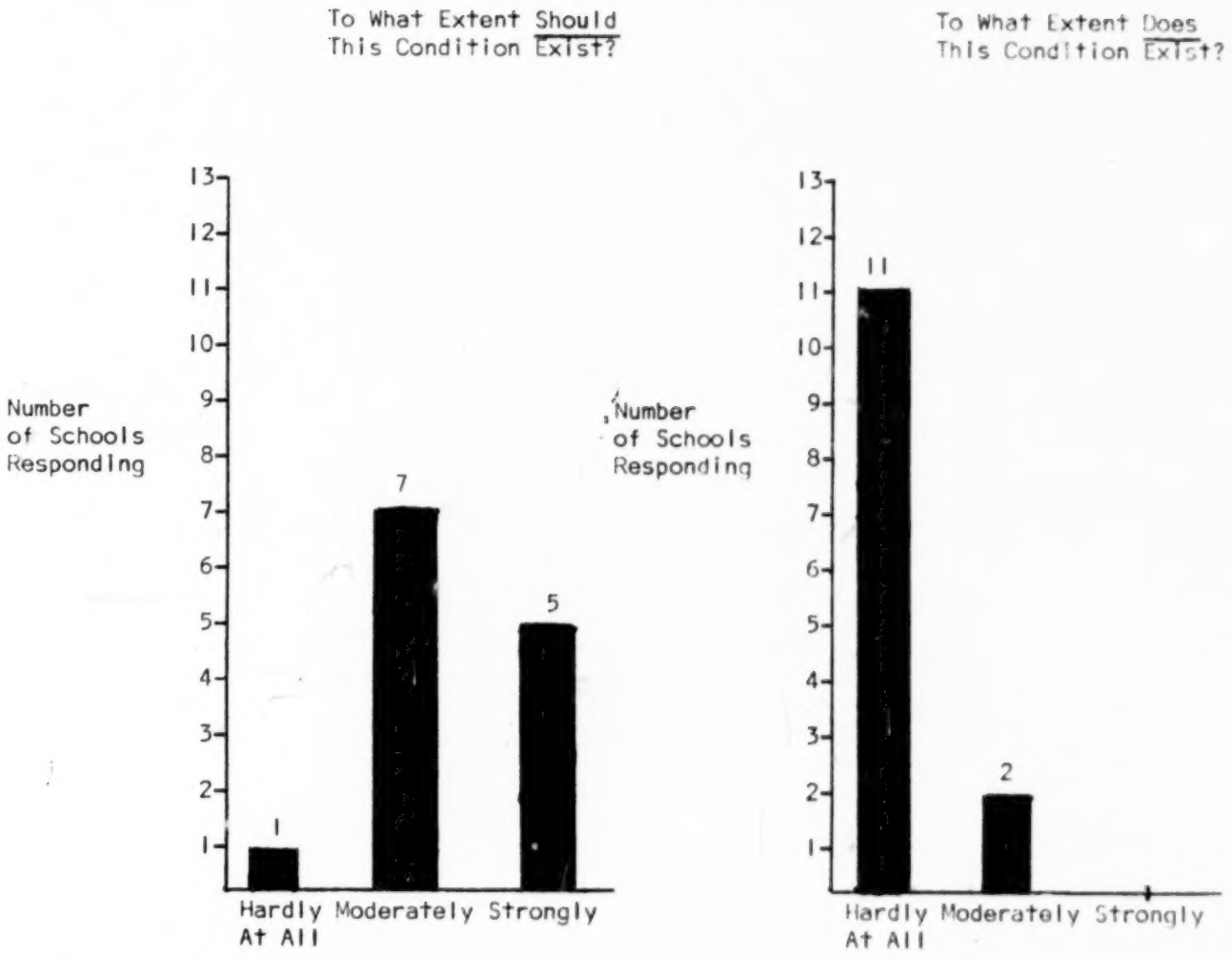


Figure III

ITEM: EVALUATION DATA ARE USED FOR PLANNING PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS.

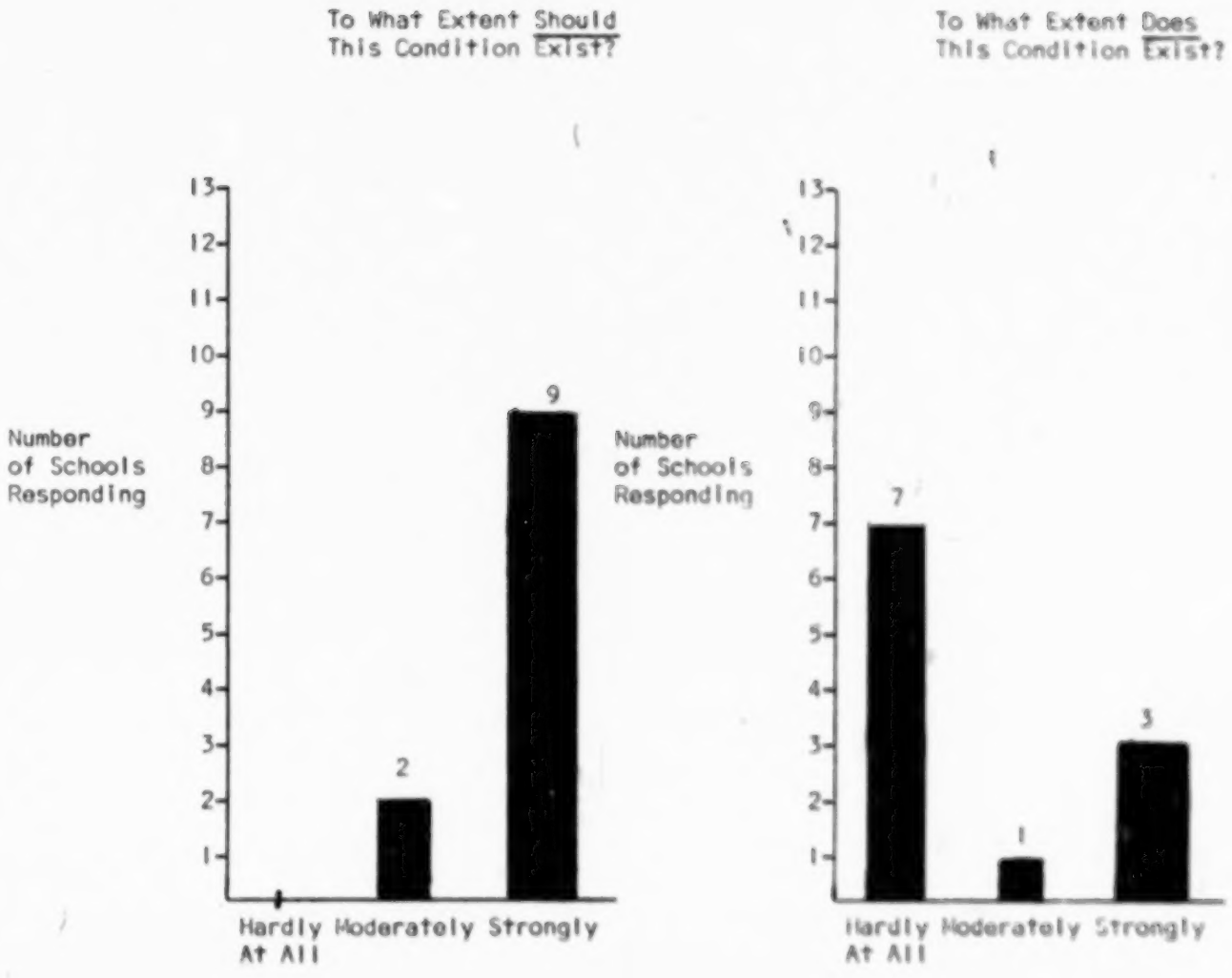
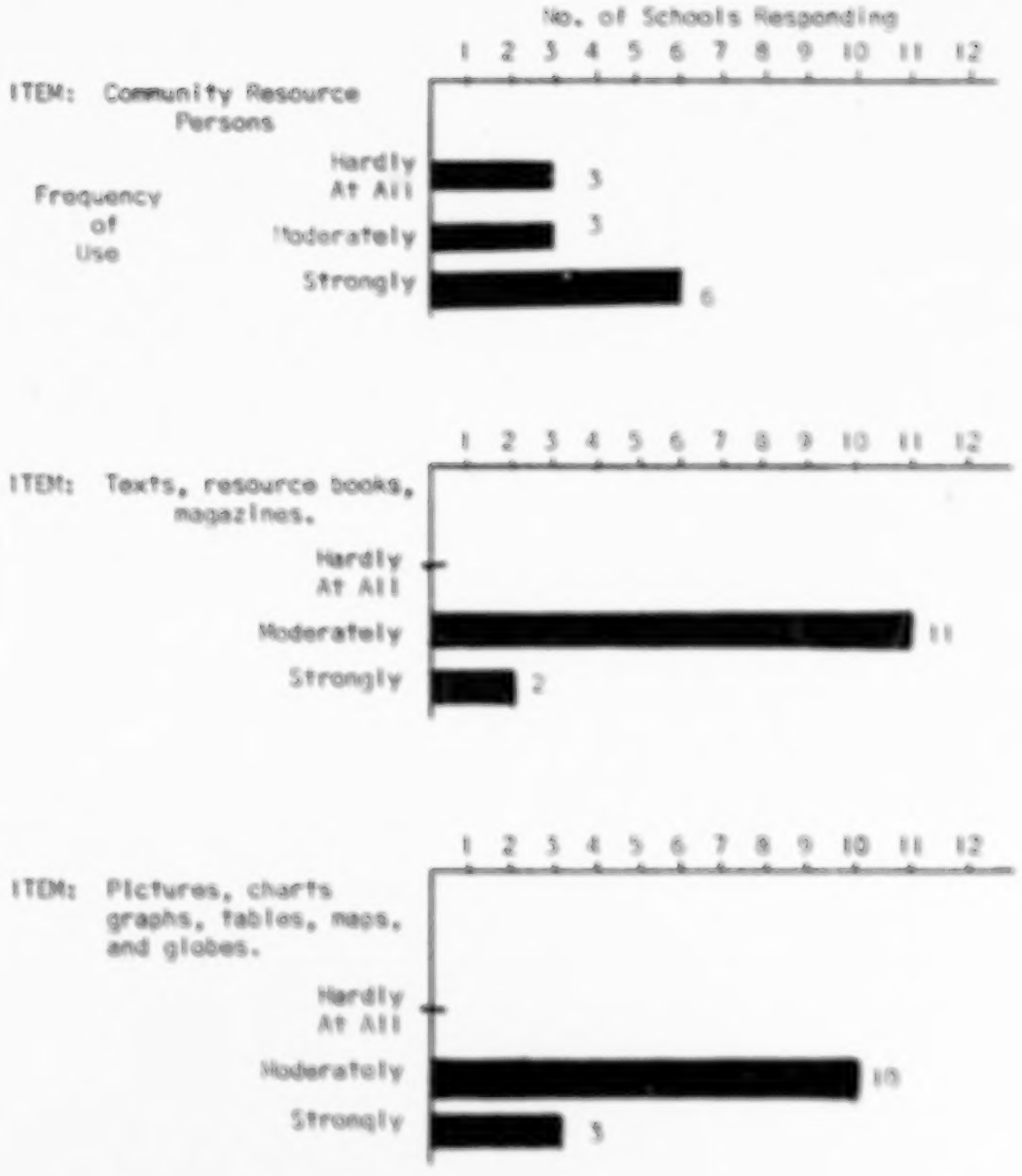


Figure IV

FREQUENCY OF USE OF SOURCES OF INFORMATION
BY 13 ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS EVALUATING SOCIAL STUDIES.



Time allocations for social studies education were in line with the State Minimum Standards for Ohio Elementary Schools.

C. Facilities

Ten of the thirteen schools reported that an area of the classroom is set aside for social studies activities. However only 1 school acknowledged having an especially equipped learning area for social studies and none of the schools possessed carrels or small rooms for independent study. Work areas for social studies projects were considered inadequate by 6 schools, moderately adequate by 5 schools, and very adequate by 2 schools. Busing facilities for field excursions were considered to be moderately adequate to inadequate by 12 of the 13 schools.

The respondents were asked to list facilities and places which should be considered to provide students with additional experiences in the social studies area. Table III is a breakdown of the number of schools listing each such facility or place.

D. Instructional Materials and Equipment

In this section of the instrument respondents were asked to evaluate the need and availability of 14 categories of instructional materials and equipment. All such categories were strongly judged as necessary and desirable for social studies instruction. However, the degree to which each type of material actually existed varied greatly. Table IV presents the responses of the 13 schools involved.

It appears evident from the data presented that the schools have adequate supplies of audio-visual hardware (projectors, T.V.'s, recorders, etc.). However, the existence of 8mm film loop projectors, cassette televisions, and programmed learning materials was rated low and may indicate a desire to experiment with these relatively new medias for social studies instruction.

The data also indicates a shortage of social studies games and puzzles, various forms of periodicals, free materials catalogs and multi-sensory materials catalogs.

Section III

Summary and Recommendations

A. Summary

In the area of staff development, teachers felt confident in their abilities to teach the social studies. They report that they foster their teaching competence in social studies by regular participation in various activities and that they use a variety of teaching methods for instruction in the social studies.

TABLE III

FREQUENCY OF SCHOOLS LISTING
FACILITIES (OUTSIDE OF THE SCHOOL)
WHICH NEED TO BE CONSIDERED FOR INCLUSION
IN THE SOCIAL STUDIES PROGRAM.

Facility Listed	Number of Schools Listing Facility
Farms	9
Libraries	8
Fire Department	7
T.V. Station	7
Post Office	6
Columbus Zoo	6
Small Businesses	6
Police Academy	5
Ohio Historical Society	5
Art Gallery	5
Grocery Warehouses	5
State Capitol	5
COSI	5
City Hall -Council	5
Parks	4
Airport	4
Courts - Trials	3
Churches	3
Amish Community	3
Newspapers	3
Water Treatment Plant	2
Blacklick Woods	2
YMCA	2

TABLE IV

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS REPORTING THE DEGREE OF EXISTENCE OF 14 CATEGORIES OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT.

Categories of equipment and materials strongly viewed by the respondents as necessary for social studies instruction.	Number of schools reporting the degree to which the equipment and materials listed do exist.		
	Hardly At All	Moderately	Strongly
Courses of study and curriculum guides.	0	8	4
Reference materials	0	10	3
Periodicals (magazines, newspapers, etc.)	6	3	2
Maps, globes, atlases, etc.	2	9	2
Social Studies games and puzzles	8	3	1
Slides, Filmstrips, Transparencies	1	11	1
Projectors (film, filmstrip, overhead)	0	5	6
Field trip catalog	3	5	5
Multi-sensory materials catalog	6	6	1
Free-materials catalog	8	4	1
Programmed learning materials	10	2	1
Televisions, recorders, receivers	0	7	6
Film loop projectors 8mm	9	1	2
Cassette television	13	0	0

Teachers were only mildly interested in system-level curriculum committees. However, they did feel that social studies consultants should be made available to their buildings by assigning resource personnel to each regional center.

Nine of the thirteen schools reported that behavioral objectives of some type existed within their schools. All of the schools felt that their learning activities were appropriate to the objectives of their social studies program. However, the use of evaluation data for program planning and improvement was strongly questioned by the respondents.

Nine of the thirteen schools at least moderately involve community resource persons in their social studies programs. Moderate use of textbooks, resource books, pictures, maps, globes, and charts was also reported by the schools.

All of the schools felt that the social studies program focuses upon a pluralistic society and the contributions of all persons of different races, religion and cultural backgrounds. It was also felt that the program helps students to improve their individual and group problem solving skills. Teachers and parents also noted that the program helps to involve students in the affairs of their community.

In the area of social studies facilities, all of the schools felt that carrels or small rooms for independent study are needed. Busing facilities for field excursions were considered to be moderately adequate to inadequate by 12 of the 13 schools. Visits to farms, libraries, fire stations, and T.V. stations were strongly suggested by a majority of schools as facilities which need to be considered for inclusion in the social studies program.

All of the schools appear to have an adequate supply of audio-visual hardware (projectors, television sets, recorders, etc.). However, the majority of schools felt that more 8mm film loop projectors, cassette televisions and programmed learning materials are needed. The data also indicated a shortage of social studies games and puzzles, various forms of periodicals, free materials catalogs and multi-sensory materials catalogs.

B. Recommendations

1. Building-level Recommendations

The following recommendations are based upon the data obtained from the 13 schools evaluating the social studies:

a. Individual schools need to develop plans (and thusly budget) for instructional materials for teaching social studies. Such plans need to be systematic and include those resources in their own school community. Priority materials for purchase would include social studies games and puzzles (all levels), subscriptions to various

periodicals such as Junior Scholastic, Weekly Reader, etc., and programmed learning materials. Individual schools need also to search out and compile catalogs of freee materials available within the school community.

b. The centralization and cataloging of social studies materials within the schools is indicated. Such organization can help prevent loss and "hoarding" of materials and also facilitate the establishment of priority materials to be ordered.

c. Individual school staffs need to study classroom organizational schemes to see if facilities are being overlooked for independent study and project work areas.

d. More initiative should be taken by schools in evaluating their instructional programs. Data thus obtained could be used for program planning improvement. Dissemination of the results of such evaluations should be a priority of each school.

2. System-level Recommendations

a. A series of in-service education courses which focus upon social studies curriculum and instruction is indicated. Content of the courses might include such topics as the following:

(1) Recent innovations in teaching social studies.

(2) Social studies and the learning center.

(3) Creative activities for the social studies.

(4) Individualizing the social studies curriculum.

(5) Independent study and the social studies.

(6) Instructional materials available within the system for teaching social studies.

(7) Making effective use of community resource persons within the social studies program.

(8) Involvement of parents and students in the formation of goals and objectives for the social studies program.

b. Continual and regular two-way communication between the various regional center principals and the schools they serve is apparently needed. Area principals could hold

special meetings at their centers for the teachers within their areas or staff meeting time could be allocated for the area principals to speak to teachers. At such meetings available services and materials could be explained and discussed.

c. Since busing services appeared to be a large concern of teachers and parents (for field trips), more school funds need to be allocated for this purpose.

d. Teachers should be informed as to the services of the audio-visual library. Alternative sources for films, records, slides, etc. should be provided to the teaching staff if not available through the central offices.

e. More individualized help should be given by the Department of Evaluation, Research and Planning to those schools wishing to assess their social studies goals and objectives. Some of the schools need assistance in designing evaluations for experimental programs with which they are working.

f. Current information on social studies and the other curriculum areas needs to be disseminated to the teaching staff. Such information could be combined into one school publication (possibly monthly) with contributions from the various curriculum departments in the central office.

3. Project-level Recommendations

a. Project PRIMES must continue to furnish facilitating services to elementary school staffs in order to continually improve communication between teachers, parents and principals while engaging in process evaluation activities. Thus the project staff should continue to study, alter, and improve interfacing skills and group discussion dynamics.

b. The evaluation instrument furnished through Project PRIMES to schools assessing their social studies programs needs to be revised in order to yield the necessary data for decision-making at all levels. The instrument needs to be written with closer adherence to the State Minimum Standards of Ohio which serve as the criteria for the evaluation.

c. A fourth (4th) approach should be added to the three approaches already implemented by the project staff. This approach would allow elementary schools to develop their own evaluation instrument, implementation procedures, and reporting methods. This increased flexibility would be open to schools as they assess themselves in light of Ohio Elementary Standards.

4. State-level Recommendations

   a. A feasibility study in regard to the Revised Standards of 1970 needs to be implemented by the State Department of Education. Many of the minimum-level standards are much too difficult and expensive for schools to meet. Few, if any, of the schools in Columbus are meeting the standards as they are now written.

   b. More explicit criteria for compliance with the state standards are needed for evaluation purposes. Even after completion of self-evaluation activities, many schools still do not know if they are in compliance with minimum and/or level II standards.